

**Permanent Mission of India
Geneva**

**12th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues
(28-29 November 2019)
Statement by India**

Madam Chair,

India is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Under the Constitution of India, many safeguards have been granted to the religious and linguistic minorities. **Article 29 and Article 30** of the Constitution envisage protection of the interests of minorities and recognize their right to conserve their distinct language and culture. **Article 350A** provides for instruction in the **mother tongue at the Primary stage of education** to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.

3. In 2006, **Ministry of Minority Affairs** was carved out of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment to ensure a more focused approach towards issues relating to the notified minority communities namely **Muslimss, Christian, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis and Jain.**

4. Language is the most important medium of communication and education; therefore, its development occupies an important place in the **National Policy on Education and Programme of Action** in India with specific focus on the languages of minorities. The Language Policy of India is pluralistic in its scope. It is both

language-development oriented and language-survival oriented.

5. Our National Policy, inter-alia, ensures promotion and development of **22 Indian languages** listed in the schedule VIII of our Constitution including Kashmiri, Urdu, Punjabi, Bodo and Tamil. India has established a **Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL)** up in 1969 to help in evolving and implementing the language policy of Government of India.

Madam Chair

6. India stands committed in fulfilment of all rights of the minorities with emphatic focus on their language and education in line with the principles as enshrined in **the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic minorities, Religious and Linguistic Minorities**. We look forward to engaging discussions during this forum.

Thank you, Madam Chair.